

## Heartlines by evendanstevens

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**Summary:**

a collection of oneshots and prompts mostly featuring everyone's favourite grumpy chief of police and determined badass mother

recent: Hopper decides maybe it's time he and El had 'the talk'. And he could use Joyce's help in doing so.

# 1. "I really am amazing"

## Author's Note:

tumblr dialogue based prompt - "I really am amazing"

"I really am amazing."

Hopper was frustrated to say the least. He was supposed to be out of here long before now, but Mrs. Conway was still sitting in front of him, blabbing away about some kids in cars speeding past her house on Glenn Street in the middle of the night. She was infamous round the station for making a mountain out of a mole hill. She was a regular visitors, usually coming in around two, three times a month with some outrageous accusation. Usually, Hopper didn't mind all too much when she came by, her stories always made for good shit-talking fuel with the deputies. But today he had somewhere to be.

He and Joyce had plans to meet on her lunch break. They were going to head out in the Blazer to the lookout point for a little, ahem, afternoon delight. Joyce had joked that they were sneaking around like teenagers, they might as well act like it. Besides they barely had any alone time together what with jobs and kids. So this was the best they could come up with.

He had been eagerly anticipating lunch time the whole morning, every minute that past was agonisingly slow. And now the time had arrived, and here was Mrs. Conway, still biting his ear off with tales of noisy engines that had somehow transpired into a story about a car crash back in the 60s but Hopper had tuned out minutes beforehand and now couldn't take his eyes off of the clock behind her head. It was now 1:43 p.m., he was supposed to have left thirteen minutes ago. And despite his best attempts to get Flo to take her off his hands, the woman had persisted.

It was then that he heard the voices from outside the door, his ears immediately perked up at the sound of raised tones. It sounded like Flo was shouting.

"You can't go in there!" turned out Flo was indeed shouting as the voices got closer and closer to the door.

"The hell I can't!" another female voice yelled back. It appeared to be a voice on the move, a voice Hopper had been hearing a lot lately. He picked his head up to listen closer.

"Joyce, I told you, just wait a minute--"

But Joyce didn't wait a minute. Instead she burst into the room, guns blazing. Before he could take a moment to appreciate the sight of his... his... of her, he then noticed the wild look in her eyes and the frantic expression on her face. Hopper was immediately on high alert.

"Chief, I tried to tell her..." Flo trailed off as she let out an exasperated sigh.

"It's alright, Flo," he held up a hand to her in reassurance but never took his eyes off a panicked looking Joyce. "What's wrong, Joyce?" he sat forward, giving her his full attention.

"Someone...some..." she was panting and held a hand up to her forehead, trying to find the words. "Someone is in my house!" she eventually exclaimed, causing Hopper's eyebrows to hit the roof. Who the hell could be in her house? All kinds of theories of government snooping to robbers to hired assassins ran through his head as he rose to his feet.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Byers but I believe I was speaking to--"

"Mrs. Conway this is urgent!" Joyce cut her off abruptly, holding up a finger to her, silencing the older woman. "I'm sure it's super important what you have to say to the Chief but there is someone in my god damn *house*!"

The shocked expression on the uptight Mrs. Conway's face would've made Hopper snort with laughter. But this wasn't the time. Mrs. Conway got up from her chair and gaped at Joyce before turning her head towards Hopper.

"Flo can you take her out of here and get a phone number," he said in a voice he tried desperately to sound calm. Of course they had her

phone number, but he hoped it gave her a sense that they were doing something and she could be on her way. "Mrs. Conway I'm real sorry and I will call you later this afternoon, but Joyce is right, this is an urgent matter," he said quickly when he saw her mouth open to retaliate.

Flo was already leading the gobsmacked woman away as she let out a gasp of "well I *never!*" As they left Joyce began desperately pacing his office, muttering to herself possibilities of who could be in the house and if her boys were okay. When the door shut behind them, Hopper rushed round to Joyce and bent down in front of her, placing his hands on her shoulders, concern all over his face as he searched to meet her eyes.

"Joyce, tell me what you saw..." he was about to begin his interrogation when Joyce's eyes met his and her lips curled into a mischievous smirk. Confusion coursed through him as he looked at her dumbfounded. "Joyce...?" was all he could say.

"Y'know, sometimes this whole 'crazy Joyce Byers' thing really works to my advantage," she giggled ever so slightly as realisation swept over him and his face softened. Her smile only grew as she watched the pieces come together in his eyes. "When you didn't show up I figured something was holding you up. Then when I saw Mrs. Conway's car parked out front I thought I'd come to your rescue."

She had been faking. Faking a whole outburst just to get Mrs. Conway to leave. He sighed before the smile reached his mouth and he quickly kissed her forehead for being the genius she was. "You are just..." he trailed off as the smile spread across his face, staring at her in complete admiration.

"I know," she rolled her eyes, the smirk on her face had now stretched into a full Cheshire grin. "I really am amazing."

After they both let out a quick laugh, his lips were on hers in an instant. He kissed her with all the want he had been harbouring all day for her. He didn't start the kiss off slow as he normally did, he kissed her with the fervour he had for her, and she was giving it right back to him as her arms looped around his neck, pulling him down to her as his hands went to her waist. But it wasn't enough. He needed

more of her. With an impatient growl, he grabbed hold of her ass and picked her up. She instinctively wrapped her legs around his waist with a pleasantly surprised squeak.

Not breaking his lips from hers, he moved them to his desk and sat her down on top. His own hunger for her was clearly reciprocated as Joyce's lips suddenly moved down to his neck in a parade of long and hard kisses, dancing around his more than sensitive jugular, driving him crazy.

"We should probably get going..." he groaned, his lips curling into a smile when she didn't stop. "I don't know if I can control myself much longer..."

"Then don't," she murmured between kisses. He gently tore away from her then and furrowed his brows, looking down at her with a curious expression. She was looking at him up and down, taking him in, already undressing him with her eyes. "I only have another twenty minutes," her eyes met his in a challenging manner before she nodded to the wall behind him. "Lock the door."

His eyes lit up like a child on Christmas and Joyce almost burst out laughing at the excited grin on his face. He practically pounced toward the door before locking it. He walked back over to her, taking his time as to take in the sight of her, perched on his desk, a red blush on her cheeks and hair already a mess before they'd even truly started. He held up a finger to her as he reached her.

"You are just simply..."

"I know, I know," she rolled her eyes again before meeting his eyes with a mesmerising smile. "Amazing."

## 2. “Get that away from my hair.”

### Notes for the Chapter:

tumblr dialogue prompt - “Get that away from my hair.”

With the annual Hawkins police dinner coming up, Hopper had been tasked with bringing a dessert. Normally, like every other year before, he would just show up with a some cheap, store bought cake he picked up usually on the way to the event itself. But this year, the other deputies and Flo had told him that if he didn't at least bake something he would receive an outright doughnut ban until the next dinner. And he'd be damned if those assholes denied him of his god damn doughnuts.

The only problem was Hopper had no idea where to start when it came to baking. Jane and himself had tried to make Christmas cookies back in the winter but that only resulted in the pair of them almost torching the whole cabin. So he had shamefully shown up on the Byers doorstep to ask for help. Joyce had happily volunteered to help as the kids were both at the Wheelers and she didn't have much else to do. He didn't have the heart to tell her he had initially shown up to ask for Jonathan's help knowing fine well he was the master chef of the family.

So after a quick trip to the store, the pair to gather supplies, the pair had decided on the relatively easy dish of banana cream pie. Joyce, as predicted, had ended up doing most of the work herself as she ran around the kitchen instinctively as she had done for seventeen years now. She only slightly complained when Hopper would sit down at the kitchen table and light himself a cigarette while she worked away. He had chuckled at her and made ironically sexist comments that she returned with a playfully sarcastic glare that only made him smile.

Eventually, however, it came to the whipped cream and Joyce put her foot down and demanded Hopper at least do this part. He had jokingly rolled his eyes at her, causing her to whack him lightly on the arm. He had taken the can in his hand and squeezed the nozzle.

Unfortunately he had been too busy laughing at Joyce's exaggerated instructions as he didn't notice his finger was wedged over the small opening ever so slightly that caused the cream to spurt up the way right into Joyce's face.

"God dammit, Hopper!" Joyce yelled upon impact. There was a large diagonal line going across of cream now dripping from her face. She stood there frozen for a moment, her mouth stuck in a shocked 'O' shape as she tried to register what just happened.

There was a silence over the kitchen as Hopper waited for a reaction. Eventually, he couldn't wait any longer before he let out a gut busting laugh. It was a loud laugh that seemed to fill the whole house and Joyce scrunched her face up in annoyance.

"It's not funny!" she retorted with a groan before trying to reach for a towel with her eyes squeezed shut.

Hopper was wiping his eyes as he reeled in the aftermath of his laughing fit. "Hold on, hold on," he held a hand out and placed it over her wrist to stop her as he reached over to the sink to grab a towel. He went to go and dab the whipped cream from her face when he suddenly stopped.

"Wait, what are you doing?" Joyce sensed his hesitation and tried to squint an eye open at him, careful not to let any of it drip into her eye.

"Thinking," he answered straight away, already smirking to himself.

She looked utterly confused. "What could you possibly be thinking about right now?" she sighed, throwing her hands up in frustration.

He bent down to her eye level and gently wiped the cream from her eyes. "Just thinking about how familiar this looks," he whispered as her eyes cleared. When she opened them it took her a moment to understand what he had just said.

And then she saw the smug look of anticipation on his face as he waited for her to understand his comment. The realisation came over her when her eyes widened and she let out a large gasp of disgust

that caused Hopper to let out a snort.

“Oh you disgusting son of a bitch!” she yelled as she smacked him on the chest in a scolding manner. As Hopper was too busy laughing to continue wiping her face she snatched towel clean and finished the job herself. “You are so gross!”

When Hopper calmed down from laughing, all it took was one more look a Joyce’s horrified face to set him off. He turned away, keeling over in chuckles when he turned back to Joyce and stop laughing at once. She no longer looked horrified. Now she looked menacing, an eyebrow raised at him and a sly smirk playing on her lips. And in her hand she held the can of whipped cream.

“Joyce what are you doing?” his tone was serious and direct as his eyes darted between the can and the threatening expression on her face.

“Oh I don’t know...” she sighed dramatically. She took a step towards him that made him back up into the counter. He looked around frantically for all possible exits as she continued to come toward him. But it was no use. She had him cornered. “Was just thinking about giving the king of the assholes his own crown,” she sneered as she began to raise the can.

His face fell to an expression of dire worry. He raised a preventing finger to her. “Get that away from my hair,” he demanded calmly, trying to diffuse the tension. But when he heard the small hiss of air as Joyce slowly pressed down on the nozzle he ducked out from underneath her and sprinted to the furthest side of the kitchen table. She turned on her heel and rushed to the other side of the table. “Joyce, let’s just talk about this...”

She laughed manically, making him playfully uneasy. “Oh I don’t think so, Chief,” she grinned before giving chase. She ended up chasing him round the whole damn house in a close pursuit as Hopper tried effortlessly to evade her and her weapon of choice. She laughed the whole time she chased him, the sound almost making him laugh. But the panic at the thought of sporting a whipped cream crown spurred him on to keep running.



She had pursued him all the way to the hall and he made a b-line for the front door, his heart dropping when he realised it was locked. He jiggled the handle in one last attempt to pry the door open but to no avail. He turned around to the small woman who was slowly advancing on him, a little proud wiggle in her hips as she did so.

“Joyce, sweetheart, I’m sorry!” he pleaded, almost begging her on the spot. “I’m an asshole, I’m disgusting, and I’m sorry!” he practically yelled when she got dangerously close to him.

And just when he thought it was all over, she retracted her hand holding the can and instead reached up to give him a quick kiss on the cheek. “Apology accepted,” she said softly, flashing him a smile so sweet he thought his heart would melt. He really did love that smile. He let out a happy sigh of relief before wrapping his arm round her waist, pulling her into him and leaning down to kiss her. But just as his lips were about meet hers, he was met with the unpleasant cold sensation of whipped cream coating his head. In the sensory overload of unwelcome wetness and stickiness, he had let go off Joyce’s waist. She backed up with a giggle and Hopper slowly raised his head to meet her gaze.

And then it was Joyce’s turn to run.

### 3. “Wait, before you say no!”

#### Notes for the Chapter:

tumblr dialogue based prompt - “Wait, before you say no!”

It was Friday night and Will was having his friends round to watch movies. Not wanting Jane to feel left out, Hopper thought it'd be safe enough for her to go to the Byers that evening. Besides, he'd figured Joyce could use the company. Three hours of shouting and arguing about spaceships and sharks, Joyce was more than grateful for it. While the kids were happily keeping themselves entertained in the living room, Joyce and Hopper sat through in the kitchen, talking quietly and smoking cigarettes.

Occasionally, there would be the odd foot running up the other's leg under the table, which led to sharing a knowingly flirtatious look, which led to hands wandering up inner thighs. It was then that they decided to retreat back through to the children before Hopper cleared the table and threw Joyce on top of it. After all, they were trying to keep things under wraps.

After a couple more hours of hanging out with the kids, with a fleeting visit from Jonathan and Nancy, the younger ones retreated to Will's room to continue their fun before all eventually falling asleep. Once the kids had cleared the room, it was then that Joyce looked over at Hopper only to find slumped down in a sitting position on the couch, snoring a bit quieter than usual.

Joyce looked at him for a moment and thought to herself. He looked so uncharacteristically peaceful, like slumbering lion. It was then she made her decision.

She cautiously crept over to him and gently knelt between his legs on the couch, perched in front of him. She woke him by running delicate fingers through his hair, an approving quiet moan escaping him as she did so, before bringing her hand down to his cheek. The small contact of her palm on his face was enough to wake him and she wondered when it was he became such a light sleeper. His eyes

fluttered open and immediately lit up when he saw who it was that had woken him.

“Hey, sorry was I sleeping?” his voice was a husky murmur, still half asleep.

She didn’t answer his question, instead she then moved her hand back up to his hair and fiddled it with it softly between her fingers. He revelled in the feeling and tilted his head toward her hand for harsher contact and she happily obliged as she lightly dug her fingers into his hair and massaged his scalp. “Come to bed with me,” she asked in a voice so quiet he barely heard her.

The sensation of her fingers in his hair was almost enough to make him sleep again. But when he realised what she had just said he brought a hand to her face and traced her cheek and jaw with the back of his index finger. He let out a sigh. “Joyce, you and I both know we’re not exactly the best at being quiet...” he trailed off as Joyce let out a small smile.

“Get your mind out of the gutter, Hop,” she smiled at him adoringly that only caused his eyes to soften and his lips to turn upwards into a smirk. “I meant, just come and sleep with me.” She could see the doubt in his eyes as he looked away from her and his finger paused his movements. She knew he was trying to find the right words to reject her suggestion without hurting her feelings.

“Joyce, I don’t-“

“Wait, before you say no!” she cut him off with a sharp whisper that grabbed his attention and made his eyes meet hers, slightly startled by her urgent tone. She relaxed for a second, not wanting to embarrass herself by coming off as too forward. “The kids are out for the count, they’re going to be sleeping well into the late morning, they’ll never know we were sleeping in the same bed,” she searched her eyes to see if she was convincing him but he still looked uncertain.

He sighed sadly, moving his hand to the back of her neck and stroking her hair with his fingers, almost mimicking her actions. “But what if they don’t? What if one of them, or worse, *all* of them come

through in the morning, see my car still there and an empty couch? They're not exactly stupid, Joyce."

"Then they find out about us!" she exclaimed slightly louder this time, surprising Hopper as his eyebrows hit the roof and his eyes widened. This whole time, the whole reason they were hiding was because Joyce was worried what her boys would think, what it would mean if everyone knew about their 'relationship' if they were even calling it that. Hopper had his reasons too for wanting to keep it secret, the most selfish being that he enjoyed having Joyce to himself in these moments, not wanting to invite others into whatever was happening between them. But nevertheless, their secret was and always had been Joyce's call.

"Look," Joyce exhaled heavily, almost defeated. "Either they find out about us or they don't. All I know is that right now, tonight, I just want to fall asleep in the arms of the man I-" she stopped herself when she saw his eyes widen ever so slightly. No, no she wasn't ready to go there. Not right now. "You. I just want you next to me, that's all."

When her eyes dipped, almost shamefully, he felt his heart sink. He knew in that moment that he was a fool, a fool who couldn't deny her this simple yet heartfelt request, a fool who probably would never be able to deny her anything ever again. He brought his hand to her chin and lifted her head, her eyes meeting his sadly. He gave her a reassuring smile before leaning in and pressing a soft, yet passionate kiss against her lips. When he pulled away, Joyce looked at him with waiting and hesitant eyes.

"How could I say no to that?" he brushed loose strand of hair from her face and tucked it behind her ear. Her face immediately brightened and she gave him a relieved smile before kissing him again.

## 4. Promise

### Summary for the Chapter:

Joyce reveals her fears to Hopper before he returns to Hawkins Lab.

The plan was in motion. Nancy and Steve were out back gathering heaters, El was getting herself ready as well as saying her goodbyes to the friends she had only just reunited with, and Hopper was in the kitchen reassembling his firearm on the table and congregating any weapons he could find. He was just reloading the automatic when he sensed a presence in the room. He looked up and saw Joyce looming across the table, arms crossed and staring the ground, uncertainty written all over her face.

“Hop, I don’t like this,” her voice was quiet, her throat dry from screaming and crying as Hopper had pulled her away from Bob’s dying body.

He sighed and returned his gaze to the task at hand, clicking the gun into place. “I don’t like it either, but it’s the best plan we’ve got,” he mumbled hastily as he overlooked the items he had collected.

“I don’t mean the plan, I know it’s what we have to do but,” at the sound of her letting out a shaky gasp his ears perked up and he stilled his actions. “You going back to that place, with Eleven and I just...” she trailed off and he lifted his eyes to her. Her arms had dropped to her side and her hands had formed small fists, clearly uneasy.

“She’s going to be alright, Joyce, I’ll make sure of it.”

“I’m not worried about her,” she admitted, almost guiltily with a shrug. She looked up briefly and saw the confused expression on his face. “I don’t mean it like that, I know you’ll take care of her, and I know she can handle herself. It’s just that-“ When the tears escaped her eyes, Hopper was quick to dash in front of her. He put his hands on her shoulders and bent down so that he was now eye level with her.

“Joyce what is it?” he murmured in a voice just above a whisper. When she looked at him she saw the face he had given her earlier when she finally emerged from her bedroom, one of a look of desperate sadness in his eyes. “Talk to me...”

Joyce sniffed and took a deep breath. She took one more look at her feet before looking up at him with tear filled, defeated eyes. “I don’t want to lose you, Hop,” she whispered. He stiffened as his eyebrows raised and his eyes widened. It was one of the last thing he expected to her to say and his heart was now hammering in his chest. She shook her head and looked down again. “I can’t lose you too.”

Hopper lifted his hand to her cheek. “Joyce...” he quietly prompted her but her eyes didn’t budge. “Joyce, look at me,” he whispered, gently pulled her face up with his hand, bringing her eyes to his. It was another moment when he was taken aback by her beauty, with her soft features and big brown eyes that he could very easily get lost in. And it didn’t help that she was looking at him with a melancholy admiration and caring concern that he had never seen before. When she had ventured into the tunnels to find him, he hadn’t been sure if it was out of obligation after he had helped her over the past year or if it was down to genuine care, but now as she looked at him with apprehensive eyes, it became clear to him.

Joyce truly did care for him. Perhaps not so much to the extent that he cared for her, but care nonetheless.

“You won’t lose me, okay?” he stared into her eyes, trying his hardest to reassure her. “You’re not going to lose anyone else. Especially me,” he searched her eyes to see if he had convinced her but her gaze remained hesitant. “I promise,” he said, his tone more stern this time to show her that it wasn’t just some half-assed promise he was using to calm her down, but that his promise was his word.

She seemed to relax at that and let out a breath that she had been holding for some time. She squeezed her eyes shut again and dipped her head. Hopper took the opportunity to pull her closer to him and placed a kiss on her forehead. She accepted the contact and in response Hopper bent his head down to rest against her own. For a moment the two simply breathed together. The incentive of his promise growing with every passing second, but there was still that

feeling of dread that resided deep down within them both that this could be the last time they saw each other.

But Hopper uncharacteristically decided to remain hopeful. More so because he was too afraid to say or do what he would actually want to say or do if it really was the last time they were to see each other.

It was then that Jonathan came into the room with an unconscious Will in his arms to tell them they were ready to go. They both made a move to leave before something stopped Hopper and he quickly caught her wrist in a delicate yet attention grabbing manner. She spun round and looked at him, her tears now drying. "I promise," he said one last time.

The faintest smile came across her face then, not one of happiness, but one of understanding. She responded with a simple nod before Hopper let go of her wrist and she rushed out of the front door. Hopper prayed to whatever higher power there was that he would see her again.

## 5. Officially Meeting

### Notes for the Chapter:

tumblr prompt - "Can you do something with Will and El first meeting?"

The drive back to the cabin from the lab was silent. Hopper could understand, Eleven was exhausted after everything that had happened. He remembered what Mike had said the year before about how her powers would drain her. He assumed that she had used the full extent of her powers, so he decided not to talk to her, to let her rest. They had more than enough time to talk now that she was home.

He carried her up the path in the forest, surprised she wasn't yet sleeping but she nestled into the crook of his neck and breathed deeply. What he didn't know was that she was inhaling the scent of him, the cigarette smoke and lumber, the smell of home. It comforted her. In the distance, Hopper could see the lights still on, slightly taken aback that the Byers were still there. He figured they may have been asleep.

He quietly pushed the door open and gently set El on her feet. He looked up and contrary to his belief, the Byers, along with Nancy Wheeler, were still awake. Jonathan currently had his arm around Will and was holding him close to his torso. Joyce held Will's hand in his where she sat at the foot of Hopper's camping bed.

When she caught sight of him, she stood up from the bed and walked over to him, immediately pulling him into an embrace as she let out a heavy sigh of relief. Hopper was momentarily stunned before reciprocating the hug and wrapping his arms around her shoulders, resting his chin on the top of her head. He found himself squeezing his eyes shut. While their hell was over, Joyce's hell was just beginning. But for now, she was simply to know that Hopper was alive and unharmed.

She pulled away from him and turned her attention to Eleven. Her eyes were fixed on Will who was staring wide eyed at her. He sat up,



away from Jonathan and rose to his feet.

“Will, sweetie, this is-“

“Eleven,” Will knowingly interceded and a small smile tugged at the corners of his mouth. “You closed the gate. You did it,” Will nodded encouragingly to her, his large brown eyes full of hope and his smile growing.

Eleven nodded in response. Shocking everyone in the room, she then moved toward him and wrapped her arms around his neck in a tight embrace. Will stood there, the smile had fallen from his face and he was now completely bewildered. His body was frozen. She was a little taller than him but not by much as she still rested her chin on his shoulder.

“We did it,” Eleven proclaimed proudly, yet also in a way that sounded reassuring to the boy she was hugging. It was then Will’s smile returned, but this time he smiled more to himself than anyone else. His eyes softened then as he lightly looped his arms around her back and tilted his head to rest on her shoulder.

Hopper looked to Joyce then to try and garner some understanding of the situation, but instead all she did was look up at him with tear filled eyes and a touched smile. She took his hand in her own as they admired the innocent yet intense moment playing between their respective children.

Will and Eleven were two kids who had never met in person before, yet their lives and experiences had been intertwined in such a way that the moment they saw each other there was immediate connection and recognition of each other’s hardships. They had come from completely different backgrounds yet they were so similar in the ways they were different to everyone else. And now as they hugged each other, they knew their budding friendship would always be special, just like they were.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

if anyone has any prompts they would like to send me, please do via my tumblr [evendanstevens](#) :)

## 6. Word of the Day

### Summary for the Chapter:

Jane learns a new word.

On Tuesday night, Hopper had the evening off so decided to rent some movies for him and Jane. He'd rented, at Jane's request, E.T. and Star Wars. She had also quietly asked for him to rent the Aristocats. He had smiled at that. In one of her recent secret visits to the Wheelers, she'd walked in on Holly watching the movie with animated singing and she had been intrigued. Until Mike had pulled her away, insisting it was 'stupid kids movie'. But Hopper knew fine well the secret love Jane held for musicals. He remembered how she had scrambled to hide her rent copy of 'Annie' under the floorboards like she was stashing illegal produce when the boys came over.

So he left the video store, having gone two towns over, with her requests as well as Taxi Driver for himself when Jane went to bed, and picked up snacks on the way home.

They were halfway through Star Wars when Jane let out a yawn. He'd looked over to her, her cheeks still stained and nose still sniffing from the last act of E.T. Hopper had reached over and rubbed her back to comfort her but she didn't move an inch, eyes glued to the screen. He'd quickly popped Star Wars in the VCR to lift her spirits and he guessed it had worked judging by the way she relaxed back into the couch and let out small laughs at times. But now she was yawning.

"You sleepy, kid?" he reached over and gently touched her shoulder, causing her to turn round and face him.

"No," she said softly, but her half open eyes had betrayed her.

He chuckled quietly as he watched her face fight the sleep. He let her stay up for another twenty minutes as she nestled into the side of him. During a quieter moment of the movie, he heard the soft snoring. Carefully, he reached forward to grab the remote and stop the movie. As he did so Jane groaned in protest and tightened her

arms around his middle.

“Oh so it’s gonna be like that, is it?” he arched a brow as he looked down at her. When she didn’t answer, he let out a sigh. “Okay, come on, let go of me of me a sec,” he muttered the instruction. Despite her ‘sleeping’ state, she had obeyed. When he stood up, no longer supporting her weight, she had comically flopped on the couch.

He bent down and scooped her into his arms and carried her the short distance to her bed. When she was all tucked in and back to soundly sleeping, Hopper retreated to the couch to watch Taxi Driver.

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Jane had woken up with a jump, immediately sitting upright and frantic. She had heard gunshots, multiple gun shots. And now she was panting and her heart hammering. The fear spread through her like a fever but nevertheless, Hopper needed her. She jumped out of bed and raced to the door, throwing it open, mind at the ready.

To her surprise, it had turned out the gun fire had been coming from the TV. She looked at Hopper as he hadn’t said anything since she had opened her bedroom door. As she advanced further into the room on her tip toes, she held in a laugh when she caught sight of him passed out on the couch, snoring loudly. She then looked to the TV and her eyes widened at the blood and violence on screen. Sure she had seen lot worse in real life, but she had never seen anything so graphic in her daytime viewing time.

Intrigued, Jane took her place next to Hopper on the couch and watched in fascination.

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The next day, Hopper had invited the Byers over to the cabin for dinner as a ‘thank you’ for having him and Jane over so frequently. Joyce didn’t see it as a cause for him to say thank you. If anything it should’ve been her thanking him. After all, she was more than grateful for their company, and the way they helped Joyce take her mind off everything. Nevertheless, Hopper had insisted. It wasn’t until after he had invited him that he remembered that TV dinners

wouldn't be able to do the trick this time. This time he actually needed to cook.

When the Byers arrived, Hopper was slightly relieved that it was just Joyce and Will. Jonathan had a date with the Wheeler girl and Hopper was grateful that he now had one less person to poison. He was already red faced and dressed in a food covered apron when he answered the door. Joyce had immediately offered to help with the cooking but Jim poured her a glass of wine and demanded she sit down and relax. She reluctantly followed orders and sat at the table and chatted with Hopper as he aimlessly ran around the kitchen.

Jane and Will sat quietly on the floor around the coffee table as Will caught her up on what had been going on at school that week and showing her his new drawings. He was midway through showing her a blue dragon he had drawn the night before when Hopper called them for dinner.

They all gathered round the table, Hopper and Jane at the opposing heads of the table with Joyce and Will on either side of them. Will and Jane bobbed excitedly, their little stomachs hungry and rumbling. Jim smiled at he lifted the pot in the middle of the table.

What was supposed to be chicken and mashed potatoes looked more like prison slop than anything else for that matter. Will raised his eyebrows, not sure what to say and looked to his mother. Joyce was smiling politely at a proud looking Hopper, masking her own uncertainty. He dished up their plates and when Joyce sat Jane's plate in front of her, she gave her meal an unimpressed look.

*"What the fuck is this?"*

Jim's fork came crashing down on his plate. "Hey!"

Jane looked up in complete shock and bewilderment at her adoptive father's angered exclamation. She blinked at him innocently. "What?"

"Watch your language!" he raised a finger at her in a scolding manner that only added to her confusion. "Where did you learn that word? Was it that Henderson boy again?!" Hopper looked to Will to answer.

Will was currently staring wide eyed and tight lipped at the plate in front of him, trying his hardest to appear invisible as all the colour was drained from his face. When he felt Hopper's eyes on him, he opened his mouth to deny it but the enraged look in Jim's eyes terrified him to no end. It honestly wasn't Dustin, however. Ever since Jane had come back into their lives, the boys and Max had been careful with their language, knowing that her vocabulary was growing every day. Normally they wouldn't have cared, after all she was their age, it was language they used when out of the company of adults. But it was the thought of a situation like the one that was unfolding, with a furious looking Chief of Police, that made them keep their mouths shut.

So instead of even attempting to speak, Will flashed a look to Hopper before shaking his head violently.

Hopper glanced at Joyce then to see what her take from this was, if as a mother, she knew how to handle a potty mouthed tween. But instead of the calm yet assertive demeanour he had hoped to see on her face, he was met with her biting her lip so hard he feared she would cut it on her teeth. Her watering eyes indicated that she was trying her hardest not to laugh.

Shaking his head in disbelief, he looked at Jane who still looked completely baffled by Hopper's reaction. "That is a *bad word*, okay? We don't use that word in this house, or anywhere else for that matter!" Jim scolded as he watched Jane's face contort into one of mild realisation before she slumped into her chair and looked away from him. She glanced around at Joyce and Will, not saying a word and an awkwardness overcame her. She stared off to the side with a pout and tears began to gather in her eyes.

Hopper instantly felt terrible. Wherever she had heard the word, she hadn't fully known that kids shouldn't be saying it. Especially in front of their parents. He had to remind herself that despite everything that had happened over the past year or so and despite her emotional maturing and her growing more accustomed to the outside world, she was still naïve. Yet she still tried her hardest to understand the world around her and be more like the other kids her age. And he knew she was incredibly insecure about not quite getting the hang of social situations right away, insecure about looking 'stupid' in front of her

friends and loved ones.

And now Hopper had yelled at her, in front of Will and Joyce no less, for not being able to understand. He could see the embarrassment and sadness in her face and felt like a total dick. With a sigh, he got up from his chair and made his way round to his adopted daughter. He bent down in front of her but she still didn't turn to face him.

"Hey, kid," he murmured in a much softer tone than a minute ago. She responded with turning her head further away from him. He held out his hand and gently touched her shoulder, shaking her slightly and coaxing her to turn and face him. "It's alright, I'm not mad. I was just surprised, kids, uh, they don't really say things like that," he half-lied. He knew fine well kids her age spoke like that, just not around parents. "I know you didn't know what it meant, I know you didn't mean it that way, okay?" she sniffed as Hopper looked up at her reassuringly.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell," he apologised, causing Jane to lift her hand to her eyes and wipe her face with her shirtsleeves. She still didn't look totally convinced that he wasn't mad. "Can I get a hug now?" he extended his arms to her. It had become their way of settling disputes. Rather than the pair of them storming away from each other in a rage, they had opted to take a more mature approach and talk out their problems until they were both comfortable enough to be affectionate again.

Jane gave him a small smile before timidly leaning into his embrace and hugging him in return. He rested his chin on her shoulder and rubbed her back in a comforting manner and she pulled away with a final sniff. He gave her a warm smile as he stood up and ruffled her hair before returning to his seat.

He looked at Joyce who was no longer holding in a laugh, but looking at Jim with upmost admiration. She gave him a smile and a nod, letting him know that he'd done good and handled the incident to the best of his ability. He dipped his head and smiled to himself sheepishly, he was always grateful whenever Joyce assured him that he was actually doing pretty good at this whole 'parenting' thing. After all, hers was the only opinion that truly mattered to him.

With the tension lifted in the room, they went about eating. As it turned out, with a good amount of salt and pepper, the food didn't taste nearly as awful as it appeared. They were halfway through dinner and light conversation when Hopper remembered.

"Hey so if it wasn't the Henderson boy, where *did* you learn that word?" Hopper asked Jane from across the table.

"The movie," she answered as if it were oh-so-obvious.

Hopper thought back on the night before for a moment. "I don't remember anyone in E.T. or Star Wars saying that..."

"No," she rolled her eyes and shook her head. "The gun movie," Hopper still had no idea what she was talking about. "It was loud and I woke up, but you were sleeping."

He then remembered waking up in the middle of the night on the couch with the TV switched off. He thought it had been odd to find it switched off when he could've sworn he was watching...

He let out a heavy sigh of realisation and put his head in his hands.

"What is it?" Joyce asked him, placing a hand on his arm, concern riddled in her tone.

He brought his head up and looked at Joyce with defeated eyes. "She watched Taxi Driver."

This time Joyce didn't bother holding in her laughter.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

if anyone has any prompts they would like to send me, please do via my tumblr [evendanstevens](https://www.tumblr.com/evendanstevens) :)

## 7. The Talk

### Summary for the Chapter:

Hopper decides maybe it's time he and El had 'the talk'. And he could use Joyce's help in doing so.

### Notes for the Chapter:

prompt: Hopper thinks maybe its time he had 'the talk' with Jane, but he could use a woman's perspective. Enter Joyce. "Remember how old we were?" she teases. "Yeah that is really not helping" he responds in agony. All the cigarettes in the world couldn't calm his nerves after that door opened. Joyce has her work cut out for her. Bonus points if you throw in a flashback scene to young!Jopper.

It was Saturday and miraculously Hopper was finishing early for the day. He decided to pick up lunch for El as he headed home, along with a fresh box of eggos. When he reached the door of the cabin however, he could hear the music from her boombox, gifted to her by himself for Christmas, figuring she'd grown a little tired of Hopper's records. Figuring she wouldn't hear the sound of his knock, he fumbled around in his pocket for his keys, listening to the pop rock tones of Cyndi Lauper echo through the cabin he began to wonder if it was really such a good gift idea.

"Hey, El, did you get my message? I got your favourite!" he yelled through the cabin but he voice was nothing compared to the blasting music.

Knotting his brows into a frown, he placed his shopping down on the table and headed over to El's bedroom door to go check she was still alive. He quickly knocked twice before opening the door.

"Hey, El, I'm ba- oh Jesus!"

"Dad!" El shrieked and quickly slammed the door with her mind.



Hopper turned his back on the door and leaned up against it, wide eyed and panting. He pinched the bridge of his nose and tried to process what he had just seen. El and the Wheeler boy had been sitting on her bed, kissing. El's hands draped around the boy's neck with his hands on her waist that indicated to Hopper it was a lot more than an innocent peck.

With a sigh he stepped away from the door and paced the cabin, trying to work out his best plan of action. He tried to push down the urge to storm back into the room and yell at Mike, knowing full well that would only upset El. And the last thing he wanted to do was go back into the room and actually talk to them both about it. Hopper then slumped down onto the couch and switched on the TV while he thought.

Luckily, he didn't have to think much longer about how to go about the situation when Mike sped out the room, practically sprinting to the front door.

"Bye Mr. Hopper," Mike stuttered as he rushed out of the door without giving Jim so much a chance to call after him or even say goodbye himself. Hopper noted that that was the first time Mike had ever addressed him as 'Mr. Hopper' and suddenly Jim felt about twenty years older.

After the door closed behind him, El walked out with her head hung low, afraid to look Hopper in the eye. She shuffled across to the couch and hovered next to it, as though she were awaiting whatever punishment she expected him to dish out.

"I'm not mad, kid," Hopper assured her with a exasperated grumble. Her head lifted, eyes curious as she blinked at him. Hopper turned off the TV and stood then. "But I think there are a few things we need to talk about."

El nodded in understanding and Hopper gestured for them to sit at the table. Once they sat down, he looked at her, trying to keep his expression as soft as possible. He took a deep breath.

"Have you and Mike ever, uh," he sighed. "Has Mike ever said anything to you about sex?" he asked, mustering all the restraint he

had.

Her eyes widened at him. "Sex? What, no?" she seemed confused by the concept which made Hopper slightly hopeful.

He looked away from her and stared at his hands on the table instead. "And do you know what sex is?"

"Yes," she answered straight away and any hope Hopper had been feeling quickly vanished.

He brought his eyes back to her face, she looked back at him, almost appearing offended that he would ask her such a dense question.

"Okay, what is it?"

She gave him a bewildered look before rolling her eyes and answering. "It's when a man and a woman go under the covers and kiss," she said a little too matter-of-factly for Hopper's liking. "I saw it on Days of Our Lives. But me and Mike weren't under the covers!" she quickly added, feeling the need to defend herself.

Hopper almost laughed. Almost. While he was rather thankful that they hadn't engaged in any activities that were too physical, and by the sounds of it Mike didn't seem to have any intention to commit such acts considering she didn't have a full understanding of the act itself, he was now faced with the daunting task of having to explain it to her. Deciding on the best way to go about it, he stood from his chair and went to retrieve their trusty dictionary from the shelf. He brought it back and placed it front of her.

"There's a little more to it than that," he said, gesturing to the book in front of her. She furrowed her brows at him for a moment before flicking through the dictionary.

When she finally found the page, she cleared her throat before speaking. "Sex, s-e-x," he tried not to cringe as she said it so determinedly. "Sexual activity, including specifically sexual intercourse." She stuttered through the words but eventually got there, however it didn't seem to help her understand any further. Rather than tell her, he took the dictionary from her and looked

further down the page. When he found the term he pointed at it and handed it back to her.

With a determined sigh she continued to read. “G-gen-genital contact. Especially the insertion of the pen-is into the vag-ina vagina, followed by org-as-m, c-oitus, cop-u-la-tion,” she struggled through the unfamiliar words but managed to use her sounds the way Hopper had taught her. She looked up at him, confusion still latent in her face. “But how?”

“How what?”

“How does it insert? And what’s an *org-as-m*?”

Hopper groaned and his head hit the table. After a half hour of trying to give her the most concise and PG-13 description of sex, whilst also trying to dissuade her from even trying it before she was at least 21, he gave up. He dashed over to the phone and called in the big guns.

Some time later, Joyce arrived at the cabin, a plastic bag in tow and constant mothering smile on her face. Hopper gave her a small appreciative smile as he closed the door behind her. El was sitting on the couch with her knees under her chin, silently watching the TV. When she looked over to Joyce her face immediately lit up, a shy smile on her lips.

“Hey, sweetie,” Joyce grinned as she made her way over to El and sat down next to her on the couch. “Your dad tells me there’s a couple of things we need to talk about.”

El nodded hesitantly, but still smiled at Joyce. Hopper took a moment to admire the scene in front of him. Joyce and El had really bonded from the beginning. And while El had made it clear to him that she didn’t want another mama, she was happy to have a Joyce. And as glad as Hopper was to see Joyce, he suddenly remembered the reason why she was here and he suddenly dreaded whatever was about to come out of Joyce’s mouth.

“Right, well, I think the best way to start is for you to ask me any questions you have and we’ll go from there,” Joyce nodded encouragingly to El who then shifted her eyes toward Hopper who

was hovering over the couch. Joyce's eyes followed and looked up at Hopper with an amused and understanding spark in her eye.

"Would you like it to be a girls only conversation?" Joyce looked between El and Hopper. El's eyes shifted to her hands, almost feeling bad or embarrassed for not wanting her adoptive father present.

Hopper read the expression on her face and immediately held his hands up. "Hey, that's completely fine by me!" he insisted. He backed away from the pair and gave Joyce another smile, silently thanking her and she gave him a wink and assuring smirk. He retreated to the porch for a smoke and let the girls talk it out.

It wasn't for another hour when Joyce finally exited the cabin, coming out onto the porch to join Hopper. He didn't say anything when he first saw her, instead he reached into his pocket and pulled out his cigarettes, passing one to Joyce. She smiled a thank you, taking note of the abundance of freshly stubbed cigarette butts in the ash tray next to Hopper. He had clearly been nervous about the outcome of their conversation.

She sat down next to him on the bench. "Relax, Hop, you've got nothing to worry about," she put a hand on his knee and squeezed lightly and flashed him a kind smile. "She's smart. And I've known Mike since he was a kid-"

"They still are kids," Hopper interjected.

She laughed a little at that. "And he's not stupid to enough to go fooling around with the chief's daughter before either of them are ready."

Hopper sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. Joyce pulled away and inhaled on her cigarette. "I just can't get that picture out of my head..."

"They were just kissing, Hop," Joyce scoffed playfully at him. "It could've been a whole lot worse. I mean, remember how old we were?" she teased, eyes shining at him.

Hopper almost choked on his cigarettes and frowned at the far too

amused expression on Joyce's face. "That's really not helping," he responded with a groan of agony. It especially didn't help when Joyce let out a delightful giggle, reminding him of a time a long time ago. And suddenly, all the cigarettes in the world couldn't calm his nerves after that door opened.

*It was Friday night and Joyce Horowitz was sitting on her bed, organising her records collection when she really should've been studying. The alluring sounds of Billie Holiday echoed through her room, Joyce humming along, content as she flipped through the collection she had mustered over the years. It was early, only around 7, but she was already dressed in her night gown and ready for bed. Her father had to work late so she had decided to have a quiet night in rather than head to the drive-in with her friends.*

*Her quiet night however, appeared to be disturbed when she heard a strange noise coming from her window. Furrowing her brows in confusion, she gently placed down her Little Richard record and cautiously approached the window. The odd scraping sound was unfamiliar to her and she figured that it was perhaps just critters outside but nevertheless she thought it best to check.*

*She jumped up with a shriek when the window suddenly flew upwards and Jim Hopper's head appeared in place of the glass.*

*When she calmed down, clutching her heart over her chest she looked at him. He flashed her a smug grin.*

*"Hey, Horowitz," he pumped his eyebrows at her, his smile only growing. He pulled himself and carefully stepped over the ledge and into her bedroom.*

*"James Hopper what the hell are you doing here?!" she hissed in a whisper.*

*He shrugged and ran a hand through his dirty blonde hair, a subtle move Joyce always found endearing. But of course she would never tell him that.*

*"Well, you told me your dad was working tonight. Figured I'd keep you company," he looked down at her and wondered to himself how someone*

could still look like a total knockout even when dressed in a loose fitting white night gown. His eyes suddenly felt like fire on her skin and Joyce blushed furiously.

Cursing herself she quickly rushed to her bedroom door, turning the lock on her handle.

“Yeah well he still ain’t left yet and-“

Joyce was cut off when Hopper grasped her wrists and pulled her to him, pressing his lips against hers in a hard kiss. Taken by surprise, Joyce let out a whimper, but kissed him back regardless. She hoisted herself up onto her tiptoes, allowing him to straighten his back as she wrapped her arms around his neck, pressing herself against him. Her lips parted as his hand went to the back of her head, tangling in her hair.

Her confidence growing, she walked them towards her bed, her lips not leaving his for a moment. When they reached the edge of the mattress, he sat down and pulled her into his lap. She giggled when their lips broke and she tried to find a strategic way to straddle him without her night gown restricting her. The sound was like music to Hopper’s ears.

Their kissing was suddenly interrupted by three dreaded knocks on her bedroom door.

“Joycie!” her father called from the other side of the door. Joyce’s head whipped up and her heart hammered in her chest. She tried to jump off Hopper and go to the door but his hands were like steel against her hips. “Joyce I heard you scream, you okay?” her father called again.

She looked to Hopper, mischief twinkled in his eyes as he grinned at her suggestively. Her eyes widened and she shook her head at him and turned her head over in the direction of the door. She stifled a sharp gasp, however, when Hopper’s lips immediately got to work on her neck, leaving a trail of soft and hard kisses.

“Yeah I just stubbed my toe!” Joyce called back, her voice coming out a lot more panicked than she thought it would.

“Oh, alright, well I’m just heading to work, you sure you gonna be alright here by yourself?” he shouted back to her.

*“Yeah I’ll be,” she clamped her mouth shut when Hopper suddenly bit down on her neck with a stomach flipping growl. Her eyes squeezed shut, struggling to maintain control. “I’ll be fine!” her voice cracked, causing Hopper to smile against her neck and let out a low chuckle.*

*“Okay, see ya in the mornin’!” her father’s naïve voice called happily as he backed from the door and headed down the hall.*

*Joyce didn’t call back goodbye, instead bringing her mouth back to Hopper’s. Her father was barely out the door before her night gown was on the floor.*

Hopper blushed at the memory, a sly smile on his lips. That suddenly turned into a straight line as the colour washed from his face. He stood then, stubbing out his cigarette.

“Come on we gotta go,” Hopper extended a hand to Joyce and pulled her up.

She looked up at him, completely baffled. “Go where?”

“Melvald’s,” he grumbled, heading back inside to grab their coats. When he reappeared, handing Joyce her jacket, the confusion was still on her face.

“We’re getting a damn lock for her window.”

### **Author’s Note:**

if anyone has any prompts they would like to send me, please do via my tumblr [evendanstevens](https://www.tumblr.com/evendanstevens) :)